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March 7, 2016

Testimony to the GAE Committee—Public Hearing, March 7, 2016

SUPPORT -- Raised Bill No. 5514 AAC The Department of Motor Vehicles And Automatic Voter Registration.

Greetings, Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila, and members of the GAE Committee. We are the two registrars of voters for the Town of Wilton—Tina Gardner (R) and Carole Young-Kleinfeld (D). We wish to submit joint testimony on the following bill.

Raised Bill 5514--AAC THE DEPARTMENT OF MOTOR VEHICLES AND AUTOMATIC VOTER REGISTRATION.

Updated service to voters. We support measures that make registration easier for voters and processing easier for registrars and admitting officials. So many voters tell us that, even though they may obtain a registration form at the DMV, they often forget to mail it to their town hall. Others just make the assumption that—in today's world-- they will be automatically registered at the DMV when they get a license or change their addresses. They're disappointed when they find out otherwise.

Voter registration is—by federal law-- a duty of several public agencies, including every state's DMV. Why not make it automatic and fast for the voter, by eliminating their confusion or their need to fill out a paper form, find a stamp, look up the address of their town registrars, and remember to put it in the mail? An automatic voter registration system would be an important service for those with no computers or ability to access CT's online voter registration program.

Although we don't expect that this system will be completed and ready to implement immediately, we see this legislation as enabling the Secretary of the State, in consultation with the DMV, to begin working on a system that we expect will be similar to the current Online Voter Registration program—which has made registration fast and easy for those who use it and efficient for admitting officials.

Admitting officials still maintain final control. Like the online voter registration system, we expect that an automatic system would still allow registrars to review all voter registration applications for errors, duplication, or improper completion—as we do now for mail-in registrations or online registrations—and retain final approval for all registrations.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole Young-Kleinfeld and Tina Gardner, Registrars, Wilton, CT